

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT KS

SUBJECT: KIM KWON SOK RE-ELECTED NCCK GENERAL SECRETARY

1. NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF KOREA (NCCK) ASSEMBLY HAS RE-ELECTED REV. KIM KWON SOK AS GENERAL SECRETARY FOR UNPRECEDENTED THIRD TERM. ANGLICAN BISHOP YI CHON HWAN WAS ELECTED TO NUMBER TWO OFFICE AS PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL.

2. IN POST-ELECTION CONVERSATION, REV. KIM TOLD EMBOFF THATNDN HAD HAD SOME OPPOSITION SPEARHEADED BY DR. KANG WON YONG, DIRECTOR OF ACADEMY HOUSE, BUT IN THE FACE OF SUPPORT FROM VIRTUALLY ALL OTHER MEMBER CHURCHES, THIS OPPOSITION QUICKLY CRUMBLLED. REV. KIM SAID THAT TO BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE, GOVERNMENT HAD NOT MADE ANY SERIOUS EFFORT TO EFFECT THE OUTCOME OF ELECTION. US MISSIONARY CLOSE TO NCCK TOLD EMBOFF THAT LEADERS OF MEMBER CHURCHES WERE DETERMINED TO RE-ELECT KIM KWON SOK FOR TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE MEANT THEY WERE KNUCKLING UNDER TO THE REGIME.

3. IN SEPARATE, BUT RELATED VEIN, REV. PAK HYONG KYU HAS BEEN RELEASED FROM JAIL AFTER SERVING HIS FULL TERM. PAK WAS LAST OF THREE CLERGYMEN SENT TO PRISON WITH KIM KWON SOK ON CHARGE THEY MIS-USED CHURCH FUNDS FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES.

4. COMMENT: RE-ELECTION OF KIM KWON SOK WILL HELP TO RESTORE NEEDED UNITY AND DIRECTION TO NCCK, ALTHOUGH DIFFERENCES OF OPINION AMONG CHURCH LEADERS ABOUT CHURCHS' RELATIONSHIP WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOVERNMENT REMAIN. THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT NCCK WILL PUSH

OPEN CONFRONTATION POLICY WITH GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, STEADY FAIRLY
LOW-KEY OPPOSITION WILL CONTINUE. AS KIM TOLD EMBOFF, GOVERNMENT
WITH ITS MORAL ARMAMENT CAMPAIGN AND EMPHASIS ON ERADICATING
FOREIGN INFLUENCES HAS SHIFTED FROM POLITICAL TO CULTURAL INTEL-
LECTUAL FRONT. THIS HITS DIRECTLY AT THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND
CHURCHMEN, AND SCHOLARS MUST BE MOBILIZED TO FIGHT THE GOVERN-
MENT ON THIS GROUND.
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